

# The Classical Bulletin

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## De Imperio

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The title of the speech is *De Imperio Cn. Pompei*, but you will find that another *imperium*, the "sovereignty" of the Roman people, is quite as much to the front in these sounding periods. It is true that Cicero has to admit blots on the escutcheon, it is true that at one point (9,25) he admits that to protect Roman honor he is taking refuge in a patriotic *praeteritio* of the disaster which befel Triarius, but no one who has read the oration for the Manilian Law continuously and observingly can come from that experience without feeling that the speaker has no fundamental fears about that *imperium*. For the moment in partial eclipse, it needs only a Pompey to bid the shadow begone. Already the great *imperator* had demonstrated that capacity; armed with the resources provided him in the preceding year by the Gabinian Law *efficit ut aliquando videtur omnibus gentibus ac nationibus terra marique imperare*. Cicero's attitude throughout is not unlike that of Rudyard Kipling writing of the *imperium Britannicum* forty years ago:

Yea, though we sinned and our rulers went from righteousness,  
Deep in all dishonor though we stained our garment's hem,  
Oh, be ye not dismayed, though we stumbled and we strayed;  
We were led by evil counsellors, the Lord shall deal with them.

To me the *De Imperio Cn. Pompei* is essentially a great patriotic speech, a very natural line for an orator to follow making his first appearance in the political field before a public assembly of the Roman people. He says (1,3) that he has undertaken to speak in a cause *in qua oratio deesse nemini possit*. He may be thinking directly of his idol Pompey and all his achievements, but subconsciously he feels that his ultimate theme is Rome. Yes, how could speech fail one on such a theme?

Why has the *imperium populi Romani* got into such a plight as Cicero is not only bound to admit in general but to describe in particular? Does he not make it obvious that it is a decline in the Roman character? Sergeantships (*centuriatus*) have become a regular object of sale and barter in Roman armies (13,37). Men have actually drawn funds from the public treasury to prosecute a military campaign and have used them for bribery, or, with surpassing nerve, have put them out at interest in Rome and added the interest to their private incomes (*ibid.*). The progresses of Roman commanders in Italy itself have been public disasters, not far removed from a process of capture and rape (13,38). The cities of the subject peoples have been treated as *avaritiae perfugium* (13,39). Roman commanders have stripped unfortunate communities and individuals in the Greek world of their statues and other works of art (14,40). The list could be extended greatly without going outside

the *De Imperio* itself, but we may sum the whole catalogue of grievances up by quoting a single sentence (22,65): *dificile est dictu quanto in odio simus apud exterias nationes propter eorum, quos ad eas per hos annos cum imperio misimus, libidines et iniurias*. What has become of *continentia*? Where has the sense for *iustitia* fled?

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

So then what is needed is a re-discovery of the *mores Romani*, the pattern (*exemplum*) which the "founders" (*maiores nostri*) set up, and this brings us to the central theme of the *De Imperio*. What is Cicero's justification for urging the Roman people to confer extraordinary power on Pompey? Briefly, it is this, that the *imperium populi Romani* cannot be re-established without a return to the type of character which made Rome great, and that Pompey is the veritable incarnation of that type of character. Among the several documents therefore that are usually studied as illustrative of Roman character a high place must be assigned the *De Imperio*; it is spoken by a patriotic Roman who issues from the middle class to achieve distinction at the bar and in the senate, and in it he weaves around the person of his political ideal, Pompey, the whole series of the Roman virtues. Pompey is exhibited as the model of the *mores Romani* and that, too, by a man who undoubtedly, whatever his failings under the stress of polities, cherished high ideals of what those *mores* should be. It seems to the present writer that an appreciation of this point of view sheds a new light upon what our aims should be in teaching the *De Imperio*. No doubt it can and should be made a fascinating study in Latinity just at the language's peak, no doubt it can and should be treated as a valuable source for the history of the period, but most certainly it can and should be considered as a world-document in education for character, because fundamentally Roman character contained basic qualities always valid for a civilization that is to be strong and sound. After working on the Latinity of the *De Imperio* and on its contribution to history, may we not, with the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, justly say: *alia sunt meliora quae multo attentius petimus in vita?* (4,56,69)

The *De Imperio* is thus a wonderful mine of Roman character-words. This does not make the careful teacher's task any easier; such a teacher recognizes that the word-symbols of one language never fit exactly over those of another, and that this is particularly true of word-symbols that relate to abstract ideas. But it is a task fraught with rich reward for both such an instructor and the fortunate pupils of such an instructor; it compels a consideration of *mores*, foreign and domestic, ancient and modern, with resultant clarification of ideas for all concerned. Will any one seriously maintain that

such an effort is not imperatively demanded in American education to-day?

Manifestly we cannot in this brief paper go at any length into an analysis of the *De Imperio* from this point of view, but some of the leading qualities emphasized by Cicero may be assembled *summatis*. In 11,29 we have a notable collection: *labor in negotiis, fortitudo in periculis, industria in agendo, celeritas in conficiendo, consilium in providendo*. Let us omit *celeritas in conficiendo*, which might be taken, though unjustly, as bolstering the prevalent attitude of youth in a hurry; does not our present civilization need a re-preaching of the other qualities, willingness to work and work hard, if need be, patient application, courage, foresight? In 13,36 Cicero adds to the *virtus bellandi* (and let it be said parenthetically that the study of the various significances of *virtus* in the *De Imperio* is a study in itself) certain other qualities indispensable in a general; they are indispensable in a private citizen too. Here we have listed *innocentia, temperantia, fides, facilitas, ingenium, humanitas*. No doubt *ingenium* is a variable factor; different talents are committed to different persons, but the gospel parable suggests that no one goes without some endowment which is inborn (*in-gen-iun*). But the others, "integrity," "self-control," "honor," "approachableness," "courtesy," — we cannot, any of us, excuse ourselves from doing our best to achieve these. Just what they meant to a Roman is explained in sections 37-42 following. In the explanation *ingenium* is replaced by *consilium* and *gravitas et copia dicendi*, and perhaps that makes the average individual's outlook on *ingenium* more hopeful; thoughtfulness and the ability to express one's self with some fluency and weight can in part be achieved by discipline. And discipline (see *disciplina* in 10,28) is not from the Latin standpoint as formidable a word as I fear we have made it; surely it meant, and should mean, "the things we learn" (*disco*) from the natural teachers of the young, namely, the parents and the appropriate instructors in the mental and the spiritual life.

Other qualities touched on are *prudentia, integritas*, and *gravitas* (23,68); also *perseverantia* and *constantia* (24,69). *Prudentia*, that is, *providentia*, and that in turn is *consilium in providendo*, which we have met already. *Integritas*, a characteristic of a nature which no stain has touched, "that sensibility of honor that felt a stain like a wound." *Gravitas* is the attitude of the mind that realizes that fundamentally under all the pettinesses, life is real, life is earnest, and calls for seriousness. *Constantia*, "stick-to-it-iveness," and *perseverantia*, "staying serious clear through"—are we not reminded that those who endure to the end shall be saved?

There is a description (20,59) of the function of a great public man as the Romans saw him which deserves quotation here: *consilio regere et integritate tueri et virtute confidere*. Would that not constitute a marvellous encomium of any statesman of whom it could properly be said, in regard to his attitude towards the policy to which he devoted his life, that "he directed it by his counsel, maintained it by his unspotted reputation, and brought it to a happy completion by force of character"? And one may here say that one very useful part of the

*De Imperio* is the light it throws upon an aristocratic nature and outlook, that of Q. Catulus, for whom Cicero obviously entertained a profound respect. All through the speech we hear a great deal about *auctoritas*, but it is in the portion from section 51 to the end that we can learn, better, I think, than almost anywhere else in Latin literature, what *auctoritas* really meant to the Roman. The "prestige" of birth, education, experience, and achievement is not lightly to be passed over; if democracy means a contemning of these things, it is foreordained to destruction. Democracy must use the gifts which fortune puts in its way, and not be simply the perpetual victim of rabble-rousers. This paragraph may properly be ended by an earnest plea to think once, twice, and yet again before using "authority" to translate *auctoritas*.

There is one other word to which a special sentence or two may be devoted, the word *consilium*. If one characteristic more than another stands out in Roman practice, it is the fondness for seeking counsel and advice both in the family and the state life. No important decision for the family was made without summoning the *familiae concilium* (or *consilium*, because the Romans themselves tangled the words successfully), and in the domain of state affairs the presiding officer of the senate laid before (*referre*) that body a question and received a *senatus consultum*, "the senate's bit of advice." Students might be invited to consider the frequent occurrence of the word in this *oratio romanissima*. There is at least one place where *consilium* means "the capacity to give advice," namely, the description of Lentulus (23,68); perhaps the same is true of the phrase *consilium in providendo* (11,29). By the way, if students happen to be reading the Catilinarians at the same time as the *De Imperio*, it might be well to remind them that this Lentulus is not the Lentulus who broke down in the investigation before the senate in the *In Catilinam III*.

I find one passage of the *De Imperio* in which I am unable to agree with the standard interpretation; I refer to 15,43: *cum sciamus homines in tantis rebus ut aut contemnant aut metuant aut oderint aut ament, opinione non minus et fama quam aliqua ratione certa commoveri*. The Allen and Greenough comment is: "clauses of result, dependent on *commoveri*." Such an observation appears to me to overlook the fact that this is a genuine oration, not a study-piece. Consequently the order of the words is definitely important, and I cannot escape the feeling that Romans *listening* to Cicero would inevitably connect the *ut* clause with *tantis* almost immediately preceding. This gives a thoroughly sound meaning: "since we know that men in situations of such magnitude that they experience contempt, fear, hatred, and affection are influenced, etc." A great many situations in life provoke no such reactions at all; the point is that even in situations important enough to produce such reactions, men are still influenced by rumor rather than by reason. Stylistically it is worth noting that, omitting *cum sciamus* which merely establishes the governance, if my interpretation is followed the sentence breaks naturally after *ament*, producing 24 syllables up to that point and 25 syllables after it. There is a consideration of balance there which I think cannot be ignored.

One last point, pedagogical this time. The introduction to the *De Imperio* is distinctly difficult, especially for young students. May I suggest that a very sound teaching plan is to begin with the relatively easy *narratio* which opens with 2,4, and then later return to the *prooemium*? One teacher at least has had some success by following this plan.

### Is Virgil Too Difficult?

BY NORMAN W. DEWITT

Victoria College, University of Toronto

It is not an uncommon experience of teachers of Latin to come to the conclusion that both the language and the thought of Virgil are too difficult for high-school pupils. As one teacher has recently written:<sup>1</sup> "(They) ... stand breathless before this boundless ocean of rolling rhythm, washing up its flotsam of archaic forms, illusive fancies, hidden allusions, mythological reliques. They have again and again admitted that all that any epic is properly studied for, whether of profound wisdom and grandiose conception, or of magnificent and varied incident, had gone completely over their heads while at high school."

The situation so pointedly described by this capable teacher does not, however, apply to Latin studies alone; it is similar in the case of other branches, including the so-called social studies, music, and religion. The social studies now in fashion seem easier than they are. They seem easy because they deal with home and neighborhood life as the pupils know it, but genuine understanding of such things can come only with age. The reason that Plato had inscribed over the door of his Academy the motto, "Let no one who has not mastered geometry enter here," was this, that one who has not mastered an exact study has not yet become qualified to undertake an exact study.

Latin, as a study, corresponds to an exact science. To learn the forces of the cases and moods is an elementary training in precise thinking. No other study fit to be undertaken at the high-school age contains so much logic. It leaves a residue of benefit in the mind that can no more be traced than the benefit of yesterday's breakfast. Students rebell against the mental effort demanded, of course, but they also rebell against washing the dishes or mowing the lawn, which even to the most concrete of minds must seem useful activities.

About music: no one ever became a musician by playing ragtime and jazz. It is universally admitted that young pupils must be required to attempt selections which are somewhat beyond their skill at the moment. They may not be able as yet to span an octave but the capacity to do so must be an objective from the first. The mind has its octaves as well as the piano. If tiresome exercises must be performed to develop the hands, a similar concession must be made for intellectual studies. If few become Virgilians, few become musicians.

About religion: No one objects to the young child learning by heart, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Yet many a December must come to its end before the significance of it becomes clear.

About metre: The metre of Virgil is not nearly so foreign to English as many suppose. English syllables are long or short no less than Latin syllables, and the best poets are well aware of it. The rhythm of *Mary had a little lamb* is purely accentual, but that of Gray's *Elegy* is quantitative, and it possesses excellent claim to be called the most popular poem in our language. Take for a sample the line,

The ploughman homeward plods his weary way.

Even on the lips of an unlettered person the swing of it is distinctly Virgilian, like

Ibant obseuri sola sub nocte per umbram.

Both Latin and English should be read aloud and selected lines committed to memory. Most pupils continue to love what they have once memorized.

About diction: There are no more figures of speech in Virgil than in everyday English. For some years I observed a homely sign "Homemade Bakery." This contains a transferred epithet, of which two examples occur in the beautiful line of Virgil quoted above. It was Aeneas and the Sibyl that were 'alone' and not the night; it was the night that was 'dark' and not Aeneas and the Sibyl. In the second book of the *Aeneid* one reads *ardet Ucalegon*, which means that Ucalegon's house is on fire. The man is identified with his house. This is precisely the same figure as was used by a motorist in distress, who telephoned, "I'm in the ditch; I've turned turtle." He identified himself with his car. Even the stock market reports abound in figurative language. Here is one that was easily found: "Lambs strengthen in active session, calves easier but hogs hold firm." It is a good plan for teachers to enlist the aid of pupils in culling such specimens from the newspapers. They will find more examples in our popular jargon than they find in poetry. Only it requires to be emphasized that the poets do artistically what the reporter does recklessly.

In conclusion it may be claimed that, for an epic, the *Aeneid* is relatively simple. Sentences rarely run beyond two lines, which cannot be said for Milton and Dante. The story is broken up into independent episodes terminating with the book, which cannot be said for Homer. The style is closer to colloquial Latin than Cicero's, who "spake as never man spake." The old commentator Servius said of the Fourth Book that the style is "almost comic," by which he meant such as is found in comedy, which is colloquial. The figures of speech may be matched in our daily speech. If his art exceeds the pupil's grasp, this is as it should be. Young pupils ought to be studying continually what is beyond their grasp. It is fatal to pause at their frontier. As long as we live, if we make progress, a new horizon is always rising to view.

<sup>1</sup> See "Is the *Aeneid* a Suitable High-School Text?" *CLASSICAL BULLETIN*, February, 1938.

### Otium

Otium, Catulle, tibi molestumst:  
Otio exultas nimiumque gestis.

Otium et reges prius et beatas  
Perdidit urbes.

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## Editorial

Once upon a time there was a bird, and the name of the bird was Phoenix. The story of this bird is so wonderful that it reads like a fairy tale. It originated in Egyptian Heliopolis about 1937 B. C., and is still vital enough in A. D. 1937 to interest classical scholars. Ancient literature mentions the Phoenix in 128 passages, and there are at least as many books, pamphlets, and other publications that deal with it in modern times.<sup>1</sup> In Western writings the Phoenix appears for the first time in Hesiod. Two centuries later the wide-awake "seeker," novelist, and storyteller Herodotus visits the wonderland along the Nile and writes the first detailed account of the bird. Thus, though a child of Eastern fancy, the legend owes its embellishment to Greek imagination without, however, concealing its Egyptian provenance. A soft and somewhat somber tone runs through it: the Phoenix lives only to die, and dies only to live again. Longevity, death, funeral pile, and immortality are things that come natural to an Egyptian brain. In Latin literature the first pretentious treatment of the legend is from Ovid. Other classical contributors to the saga are Martial, Pliny the Elder, Seneca, Tacitus, Statius, and Plutarch. In Christian times the Fathers seize upon it as a welcome symbol for Christian ideas. From longevity and rebirth it is an easy step to immortality. The story thrived in the Middle Ages and was very popular in Elizabethan literature. In fact, Elizabeth was "the Phoenix."

The classics teacher may well take note of this bird, and, if he cannot read Lactantius' *De Ave Phoenice* with his class, he may at least enrich his own knowledge of late Latin by conning these eighty-five elegiacs, now so handsomely edited, and enjoy the English rendering. And what youngsters would not like to hear about this wonderful fowl! "She differed from the other feathered folk in the form of her head and the color of her plum-

age. Common tradition set the span of her life at five hundred years; and when this period drew to a close the bird built a pyre and deposited there the principles of life from which a new Phoenix rose." In other respects, too, she was different. "All birds shared in Eve's sin," says a Rabbinical account, "and ate of the forbidden fruit—save the Phoenix," for which act of obedience she earned a measure of immortality.

The editor of *Lactanti De Ave Phoenice* is ready to accept the Lactantian authorship. She discusses the pros and cons in full, and then concludes: "The work is clearly that of a Christian since it treats the pagan legend of the Phoenix in an entirely new religious spirit. And on grounds of diction not one decisive argument can refute the hypothesis of Lactantian authorship. In versification and style it is correct, sometimes even elegant, and it contains many classical reminiscences . . . In poetic flavor it is inferior to the *Phoenix* of Claudian. Yet *De Ave Phoenice* is well worthy of the 'Christian Cicero' as a versifier."

<sup>1</sup> *Lactanti De Ave Phoenice: With Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary*, by Mary Cletus FitzPatrick. A Thesis in Latin: University of Pennsylvania, 1933.

Two handy and invitingly printed booklets, *A First Latin Reader* and *A Second Latin Reader*, by C. J. Vincent, Lecturer to the College, Chester, are notable attempts to put what we should call first- or second-high pupils in touch with continuous Latin. The sixty extracts of the *First Reader* deal "with some of the more romantic episodes in the rise of Rome" and describe the invasion and conquest of Britain. Of grammar there is only a bare minimum at the outset; but additional matter is introduced "in definite stages." Of the syntax once introduced the author never loses sight, but provides systematic repetition both in the Latin pieces and in the English exercises. His management of the vocabulary, too, is strictly methodical. Assuming that an average pupil can learn five hundred words in a year, he chose the happy five hundred from those most frequently occurring in *de Bello Gallico* Books I-V. Once used, the words are constantly repeated; for instance, "in the first piece there are twenty-three new words; in the second, twelve, with sixteen repeated; in the third, nine, with twenty-four repeated; in the fourth, sixteen, with fourteen repeated." This is system with a vengeance.

The *Second Reader* is built upon the same principles. The seventy-eight extracts are grouped under four headings, "Caesar in Gaul and Britain," "Rome and Mithridates," "The Conspiracy of Catiline," and "The Second Punie War." Both in syntax and in vocabulary the scope is now enlarged to match the new pieces. The words are from *de Bello Gallico, pro Lege Manilia, in Catilinam*, and *Livy*, Books XXI-XXII. In the first twenty-six extracts, which aim at being a bridge from the *First Reader* to the *Gallic War*, the original Latin has been adapted, while in the remaining selections it is only slightly altered. No example of the Accusative and Infinitive occurs before No. 11; the first use of the Subjunctive is in No. 20.

The leading idea is excellent: the sooner a young pupil touches continuous Latin, the sooner he is quickened by

the live wire of literature. Teachers that do not use these *Readers* as classbooks, may yet put them into the hands of brighter students, or recommend their use for Latin-Club meetings or some similar extra-class activity. (The Clarendon Press: 50 and 75 cents, respectively.)

Former issues of the BULLETIN have acquainted our readers with the Toledo Experiment, the great aim of which is to bring real Latin into the grade school, and it is refreshing to witness the *labor improbus* that supplies the experimenters with new texts year after year. In addition to *Latin for the Six-Year-Old American Child* and *Aural-Oral Latin for the Second Grade*, there is now *Legamus, Liberi: A Latin Reader for Pupils of the Third Grade*, all by the same author: Sr. Mary Immaculate, S.N.D., M.A. This booklet provides review matter for the first and second grade, songs, conversation, history scriptural and profane, geography, nature study, and the like,—all in Latin, and “based on the assumption that one learns to read by reading.” (Pp. v-155; price 75 cents; Toledo, Superintendent of Catholic Schools.)

#### Latin Among the Social Studies

By H. J. LEON  
University of Texas

In connection with the recent enthusiasm for curriculum revision in Texas the Latin teachers of the state stressed the importance of teaching Latin as a “social study” and tried to develop programs which would bring a closer correlation between Latin and the other subjects of the high-school curriculum, as well as with the social problems of the day.

While this sort of thing can be overdone, it appears to me that our teachers have chosen a sane direction, especially in view of the great popularity of the social subjects and the demand that every subject in the curriculum be evaluated according to the part which it plays in “training for citizenship.” To ignore this attitude on the part of those who are influential in determining the curriculum would be almost suicidal. We must fall in with the trend as far as we can do so without sacrificing our fundamental objectives in teaching Latin.

Perhaps if we eliminate much of what one educator calls “song and dance Latin,” teachers will have the time to treat the social or human aspects of their subject. To do this effectively, the Latin teacher in our day should not only be well grounded in the Latin language and the literature, but he must have a thorough acquaintance with the history, institutions, and social life of the Romans, and he must be reasonably well informed about modern institutions, social and economic theories, and scientific progress.

I do not believe that Latin will have a wider appeal if we continue to reduce the quantity of grammar and reading material to be covered. We have seen only too clearly that this policy makes for a reduction of the quality of work all along the line without the compensation of an improved interest or appreciation on the part of the students. We must make the Romans and their problems seem real to our students. I have frequently observed that intelligent persons are surprised to dis-

cover that the ancient Romans were actually human beings, with emotions and problems remarkably similar to our own, that they even had a sense of humor. There are, of course, many Latin teachers who bring forth the human values of their subject, and who introduce effective parallels with the modern world, but unfortunately there are far more who do not—teachers who do little more than have their pupils translate the text literally and explain the constructions, or who think that by getting the youngsters to carve soap models of the Arch of Titus or sing some Latin songs they are making their subject vital and interesting.

I agree entirely with Professor Rand as to the first business of the teacher of the classics, but in the high schools, at least, we must make some concessions to the fact that we are teaching in “a world devoted to natural science and sociology” and that school boards and superintendents must be convinced that our subject has a place in such a world.

#### The Language of the Church in the Classroom

By J. C. PLUMPE  
The Josephinum College, Worthington, Ohio

The following are first experiences with students who have six years of Latin and four of Greek, and who do continue their studies in a theological seminary. Perhaps the observations contain things of interest and help to others in schools of a different type.<sup>1</sup>

A course in Latin hymnology—two periods weekly—was given in the final semester. Because these students were also in sixth-year German, and actual recourse to that language was a secondary purpose, the easy German annotated text by Hellinghaus (Muenster i. W., Aschendorff, 1934) was used, though our own excellent little Germing edition (Chicago, Loyola Univ. Press, 1920) was at their disposal. Individuals were required to make regular reports on the numerous articles on liturgical hymns to be found in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (more than fifty!) and in the *American Ecclesiastical Review*—most of them from the pen of the veteran hymnologist, Msgr. Hugh T. Henry.

The students went through the course with genuine enthusiasm. After three semesters of Vergil and two of Horace, reading the hymns in considerable number seemed to have become a comparatively easy and an engaging assignment. Some students saved their nickels and dimes to acquire the expensive, though really invaluable, Britt (*The Hymns of the Breviary and Missal*; New York, Benziger; rev. ed. 1936, \$3.00), regularly used at the close of class to present one or more versions of hymns in the vernacular. Some started scrapbooks with clippings of hymns in the original Latin or in translation found here and there in our Catholic periodicals, while others began to write Latin verse, not entirely bad, of their own. In a recent contest calling for Blessed Virgin lyrics, held after this group of students had entered the seminary, seventeen entries were made, some of which, we think, will find acceptance in publications.

Postponing the course in hymnology seems to offer the advantage of enabling the student to cover a greater

number of hymns well in a relatively short time. His classical course has likewise given him maturity and experience sufficient to introduce him to a little original research of his own in matters far more important for his afteryears than, for example, the year spent in studying Horace's *Ars Poetica* or solving the mathematical puzzles of the Fifth Verrine. He also definitely feels that the study of the classics, which perhaps caused him headaches a-plenty, is bringing him real achievement and compensation. And—what is possibly more—he takes leave of his Latin course with a good taste in his mouth; to borrow from your editorial, "here is sweetness, glow, and pathos" in the end, when he is matured and is best prepared to appreciate and assimilate them.

By way of preparation for taking the hymns, the semesters in Vergil should include a good exposition of the poet's *anima naturaliter Christiana*, of his influence on early Christianity and the Christian Middle Ages (Comparetti-Benecke: *Vergil in the Middle Ages*; New York, Stechert; repr. 1929), notably on the liturgy, not entirely effaced today (e.g., through Sedulius, in the Blessed Virgin Mass: *Salve, sancta parens . . .*). This and a judicious selection from the writings of Horace will go far to engender a sympathetic understanding of the continuity of the Latin *anima* in the tradition of the classical authors, the Fathers, and the Church's liturgy.

Having mentioned the Fathers, I may add that parallel with the hours in hymnology went two hours of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, in the generally excellent annotated text by Campbell-McGuire (New York, Prentice-Hall, 1931, \$2.50). Beginning with the *Confessions* a semester earlier made it possible to read St. A.'s admiring tributes (V 13,23 ff.; IX 6,14 ff.; 32) to the great bishop of Milan, the father of Latin hymnody, simultaneously with the Ambrosian *Aeterne rerum conditor*,—*Nunc, Sancte, nobis, Spiritus*, etc. If you have not read the *Confessions* in the classroom, try it! The students will be grateful to you for it. There is among others that fine passage (III 4, 7 ff.) on his experience with Cicero's *Hortensius*. Because the student finds that as often as not passages of sublime beauty are difficult and yield new treasures of thought with repeated reading, he realizes the advantage of having studied his Latin grammar and his Cicero and Livy well. The *Confessions*, along with selections from other Fathers, such as Lactantius and St. Jerome (Text: Hebert, Ginn; \$1.48), in the freshman year, have to an extent also served the purpose of a transition from the language of the classics to that of the Christian hymns and liturgy.

As for liturgical Latin with "a dash in its blood from Greek progenitors," and the Latin of the Vulgate, the writer has found it extremely worth-while to read St. Luke or St. Paul in the Greek-Latin parallel texts by Vogels or Merk, in fifth and sixth year.

To those who are familiar with Holsapple's *Latin for Use* (New York, Croft's, 1936, \$2.50), with its selections of Christian Latinity from the Gospels to Pius XI, there can also be mentioned a fine little German collection of new Church Latin by Anders: *Lebendiges Neulatein der Kirche* (in Aschendorff's *Lesehefte*, Muenster i. W., 1933). The book, by the way, includes in large part

the reigning Pontiff's decree pronouncing the Jesuit Martyrs Blessed (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 1930, 302 ff.).

If you are acquainted with the use of a hectograph or a mimeograph, you can give your students new ecclesiastical Latinity otherwise not very readily available; for example, the breviary hymns for the Feast of Christ the King: *Te saeculorum principem, Aeterna imago altissimi, Vexilla Christus inclyta* (commentary and English version by James Veale in *Am. Eccl. Rev.*, 91, 5, Nov. 1934).

In conclusion, a question: Would it not be to the best interests and spread of the Latin liturgy, if some publisher *tandem aliquando* made available a complete Latin missal at an acceptable, *popular* price?

<sup>1</sup> [This contribution was submitted in February, 1937, in response to our request that our readers let us know what information they may have with regard to schools that provide instruction in liturgical Latin.]

#### The Status of Latin in Texas

In the schools of Texas, because of the proximity of Mexico, Spanish is the prevailing foreign language. In the year 1936-37 there were 921 secondary schools accredited in Spanish with the State Department of Education, 302 schools were accredited in Latin, while French and German were taught in only fifty and thirty schools, respectively.<sup>1</sup> Of the 302 schools teaching Latin, 39 offered three units and 75 offered four units. In the past several years a large number of schools have reduced their Latin program from three units to two, while not a few have dropped Latin altogether. An annual, state-wide Latin Tournament has kept up the interest and improved the standards of work in those schools which participate, but only about one third of the schools teaching Latin have been entering the Tournament.

The situation of the classics in the colleges of Texas is not encouraging. Only three or four colleges offer a full undergraduate program in Latin. The University of Texas is the only school in the state which offers a full program in Greek also, a subject which has disappeared entirely from the secondary schools of Texas. At the University of Texas the enrollment in Greek has held its own, but the size of the Latin classes has decreased, despite large increases in the total enrollment at the University.

None of the colleges of Texas requires Latin either for admission or for any degree. H. J. L.

<sup>1</sup> Junior high schools are not included in these figures.

We are inclined to suspect that much that is supposed to be the last result of modern thought is but the last result of modern plagiarism; but be that as it may, if the ancients are not now plagiarized, they still contain much that deserves to be plagiarized.—B. L. Gildersleeve

Culture is never quantity, it is always quality of knowledge; it is never an extension of ourselves by additions from without, it is always enlargement of ourselves by development from within; it is never something acquired, it is always something possessed; it is never a result of accumulation, it is always a result of growth.—William Hamilton Mabie

## Vergil — or His Commentators?

BY RAYMOND V. SCHODER, S. J.  
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Nec frustra signorum obitus speculamur et ortus  
*Georg. 1. 257*

What does Vergil mean by the "rising" and "setting" of the stars? His commentators are often at a loss to explain his meaning, and not seldom charge him with blatant error and self-contradiction. But Vergil is right in every case; it is they that misunderstand.

If so many commentators have erred in interpreting Vergil's references to the rising or setting of the stars, it is, it would seem, because their knowledge of astronomy is from books and charts, not from personal acquaintance and long familiarity with the heavenly bodies. Vergil, on the other hand, was a poet and had an intimate understanding of Nature. He possessed, indeed, considerable technical knowledge of astronomy, but that did not spoil his spontaneous enjoyment of the star-studded Italian night. He is wont, therefore, to speak of the heavens in terms easily understood by any personal friend of the stars, abandoning, if need be, the scientific usage of other writers for a more natural point of view. This is especially true of his mention of the rising and setting of the stars, which, unlike most authors, he prefers to determine in reference to sundown, not sunrise. This procedure is more natural, for it is much easier to tell when a star first appears at dusk than when it finally fades out in the growing light of dawn. It is also more convenient—especially for late sleepers. Nevertheless, ancient usage generally determined the rising- and setting-date with relation to sunrise, though there is little consistency<sup>1</sup> in this regard and much confusion. The confusion is greatly augmented by the fact that at each period there are two risings and two settings: the *true*, invisible one, and the *apparent*, visible one; and only too often the author does not say which he means.

In the true rising or setting, the star appears on the eastern, or vanishes below the western, horizon at the precise moment when the sun rises (if the morning period is meant) or sets (evening period); the star, of course, cannot be detected in the sun's light, but its position can be known from calculation. In the apparent rising or setting, however, the star is enough ahead of, or behind, the sun to be seen in the partial darkness as it crosses either horizon. The eight possibilities can be tabulated thus:

1. Morning invisible rising	5. Evening invisible rising
2. Morning visible rising	6. Evening visible rising
3. Morning invisible setting	7. Evening invisible setting
4. Morning visible setting	8. Evening visible setting

As was stated, most classical authors mean (2) and (4), whereas Vergil prefers the more natural (6) and (8), and whenever he does refer to other times, he always warns us of the fact. This will appear from a study of the relevant passages.

These fall into three groups, the first being that of clear references to the *evening* rising or setting, though this fact is not admitted in all cases by the commentators.

The first instance is that of *Elegies* 9.44, where Lycidas asks Moeris, "What was that song I heard you

singing all alone in the limpid *night*?" and receives the answer, "It was: 'Daphnis, why gaze you on the same old risings of the constellations?'"

Less evident to the uninitiate is the passage in *Georgics* 1.217, where Vergil urges farmers to plant millet, etc., when the constellation Taurus opens the year (that is, when the sun enters this part of the Zodiac toward the end of April) and Canis sets. Now, as Canis is just a little to the east of Taurus, when the sun is in the latter its own setting is soon followed by that of Canis. The apparent night setting is also meant at line 229, where Vergil says that one should plant vetch from the time Bootes sets, up to the frosts of midwinter. This is, clearly, the night setting (Nov. 4) and not the morning setting some five months earlier; otherwise *in medias pruinas* is meaningless. In like manner, only the night setting can be intended in *Georgics* 3.304, which treats of the proper food for goats in winter, "when once cold Aquarius begins to set and pour down rain on the end of the year" (February, the end of the old Roman year). The *morning* setting of the Water Bearer would be in June.

There is, however, a passage that has caused more trouble. In *Aeneid*, 1.535, Ilioneus is narrating to Dido how the Trojans have happened on her realm: they had been sailing from Italy when "stormy Orion, rising with sudden surge, drove us into unknown seas . . . and a few of us have now landed on your shores." Sidgwick, usually correct on astronomical points, accuses Vergil of ignorance in applying the epithet *nimbosus* to Orion here, when the June (i.e., the morning) rising is meant, since that adjective is only proper for its *setting* (at sunrise) in October. That *nimbosus* belongs to Orion only in the fall is very true. That is precisely why Vergil uses it here, for he means the *evening* rising, which occurs toward the beginning of November. Now, the landing took place at that time, and not in June, as is proved by Anna's words to Dido (4.52), spoken a day or so after the arrival of the Trojans: "Devise reasons why he should stay—'while on the sea *winter* (*hiems*) and rainy Orion rage themselves out . . .'" Later on (4.193), Rumor says the lovers are spending the *winter* together in idle pleasures; and finally, Dido reproaches Aeneas (4.309) for deserting her even while *winter* makes the sea unfit for sailing. Nor is 4.756 an excuse for thinking the morning, or June, rising is meant, for (*septima*) *aestas* there definitely does not mean "summer," but merely "year," as Servius, who knew poetic usage at first hand, says in his scholion on this line: *per aestates, annos intellige*.<sup>2</sup> Sidgwick's objection and chronology are inadmissible, and Vergil is wholly correct.

Once more, in *Aeneid* 4.53, Anchises' shade appears "as often as *Night* cloaks the earth and the fiery stars rise."

It must not be thought, however, that *cadere*, etc., when applied to the stars, always has the technical force of denoting the annual *setting*-date of a heavenly body, for it clearly cannot signify this in *Aeneid* 3.512-517, where Palinurus is specifically said to be watching *sidera . . . labentia at midnight*. Evidently, this should not be rendered "setting," but "gliding along," a distinctly proper and poetic way of speaking. The same meaning

appears in the beautiful *suadentque cadentia sidera somnos* of *Aeneid* 2.8 and 4.81. Both the usual comment, "setting stars, i.e., dawn," and Mackail's more ingenious contention that *cadentia* means "waning," "dying out" at dawn, seem to involve ridiculous consequences, by making Vergil twice tell us that his hero, set up as a model of Roman moderation, indulged in banquets that lasted from midafternoon (the usual time for ancient feasts to commence) until dawn! In fact, at 2.8, Aeneas has not yet even begun his long story; and the first few lines of Book IV tell us that, when it was over, Dido could not sleep, but lay awake till dawn! Again, can *dawn* be said to invite to sleep? *Cadentia* simply indicates that the silent, relentless march of the constellations in the dead of night calms one's crowding thoughts and emotions, and induces a state where sleep comes readily. The context, too, proves that this interpretation is correct. In the first quotation, *Nox umida caelo praeccipitat* merely shows that it is past midnight, that Night has climbed past the zenith and is now dropping to the other horizon.<sup>3</sup> In the second passage, the words *lumenque obscura vicissim Luna premit* cannot be urged as an argument for dawn, since the moon sets at 24 different hours of day or night in the course of each month; its disappearance here merely emphasizes the darkness and affords the poet occasion for the striking idea contained in *vicissim*.<sup>4</sup> Of course, it is still easy to "prove" that the poet really means "dawn"; one need simply ignore the context!

It may be that some commentators were deceived into considering *cadere* as meaning "fade out" because it includes that meaning, especially as used in *Aeneid* 8.59, where Aeneas in a dream is bidden placate Juno *primis cadentibus astris*, i.e., on awakening at dawn. Vergil, however, seems to mean primarily "when the stars first set" as the sun begins to appear—in other words, when the half-sphere of Night has revolved completely, and the period of daylight is again at hand. When this happens the stars do "die out," but *cadere* never seems directly to have this force when applied to the stars.<sup>5</sup> Here, then, Vergil shifts his viewpoint, and speaks of the star's setting at sunrise and not sunset. The context, however, so clearly indicates the morning period that the change from his ordinary point of reference is evident. So also in the other passages of this third class, Vergil takes care to point out the fact that he intends the *morning* rising or setting.

Not understanding Vergil's point of view, many have found great difficulty in *Georgics* 1.221-226,—Page, for instance, who claims that Vergil contradicts himself. Heyne, after futile attempts to wrest a different meaning from the text, reluctantly comes to the same sad conclusion. Now it would be wrong for Vergil to give the *morning* setting of the Crown as merely another sign of the date on which the Pleiades set in the morning, for the Crown is several months behind the Pleiades. The point is that Vergil does *not* mean the morning setting of the Crown, but, as usual, the evening setting; he does, however, explicitly say he means the morning setting of the Pleiades (*Eoae Atlantides abscondantur*); now this occurs on about the same day as the *night* setting of the Crown.

With equal care, Vergil expressly tells us he means the morning period in *Georgics* 4.231-235 and *Aeneid* 7.719, by purposely giving the qualification that the stars in question set in *winter's waves*. Their night setting would be in the summer.

The only passage where Vergil does not clearly call our attention to his departure from the sunset point of view is in the first *Georgic*, line 67, where he directs that poor soil be plowed *sub ipsum Arcturum*, undoubtedly meaning thereby the early part of September, the date given for such operations by Columella, Pliny, etc. *Sub ipsum* indeed is rather noncommittal, but almost certainly it means "just before the rising" of Arcturus—at dawn, since the night rising is in the spring. The time for plowing, however, was so well known that Vergil saw no danger in simply following here the usage of earlier writers like Hesiod and Aratus.

To sum up, then, we may say that Vergil, unlike most classical authors, prefers the more easily observed sunset period as point of reference in determining the rising- or setting-dates of the various stars, and that, in every case but one, when he does refer to the period of sunrise he explicitly tells us so; that *all* of his astronomical references are capable of easy interpretation if we bear in mind that he speaks as a poet and an intimate friend of Nature, not as a scientist, and that he does not always follow earlier usage.

<sup>1</sup> Thus Hesiod, who greatly influenced subsequent usage, speaks of Arcturus rising brilliant *at dusk* (*Works and Days* 564-568), but a little later (619) of the *morning* setting of the Pleiades.

<sup>2</sup> The *Thesaurus L. L.* (I, 1091) quotes four other instances of *estates* meaning "year" in Vergil. Cf. also the Scholion on Horace *Carm.* 1.15.35: *hiemes synekdochikas pro annis posuit* (ut *Aen.* 1. 265); *num et estates similiter posuit* *Verg.* (ut *Aen.* 1. 756).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 2.251: *Vertitur interea caelum et ruit Oceano nox*, where the same image points to the first stages of Night's course through the heavens.

<sup>4</sup> Mackail supports his interpretation of "waning" by adducing *surgere* as having the converse meaning "shine forth" (e.g., *Aen.* 4.352; 6.453); but this seems unnecessary in every instance.

<sup>5</sup> The *Thes. L. L.* lists no instance of such a meaning of *cadere* when used of the stars, though it gives many cases of this force in reference to other things, e. g., wind, courage, etc.

The final test of a schoolbook is in the classroom, and no reviewer can tell beforehand how much good a particular teacher can get out of it with his individual class. Teachers differ, and classes differ. A progressive teacher is, therefore, like a sailor—constantly on the lookout for any help he may deserv in the offing. His well-stocked library is a good provision against the rainy day; and when the rainy day does come, a change of textbook, or the use of a subsidiary text, may save his class.

L. Caecelius (or Caelius) Firmianus Laetantius was, like Minucius Felix (?), Tertullian, St. Cyprian, Arnobius, and Commodian, an African by birth. He became a convert to Christianity, but was never quite familiar with Christian faith and practice. St. Jerome says of him: "Utinam tam nostra adfirmare potuisset, quam facile aliena destruxit!" His works are (1) *Institutiones divinae* in seven books; (2) *Epitome to the Institutiones*; (3) *De opificio Dei* (sc. man); (4) *De ira Dei* (against the Epicureans and Stoics); (5) *De moribus persecutorum*; and (6) *De ave Phoenice* (the authorship of which is disputed).

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